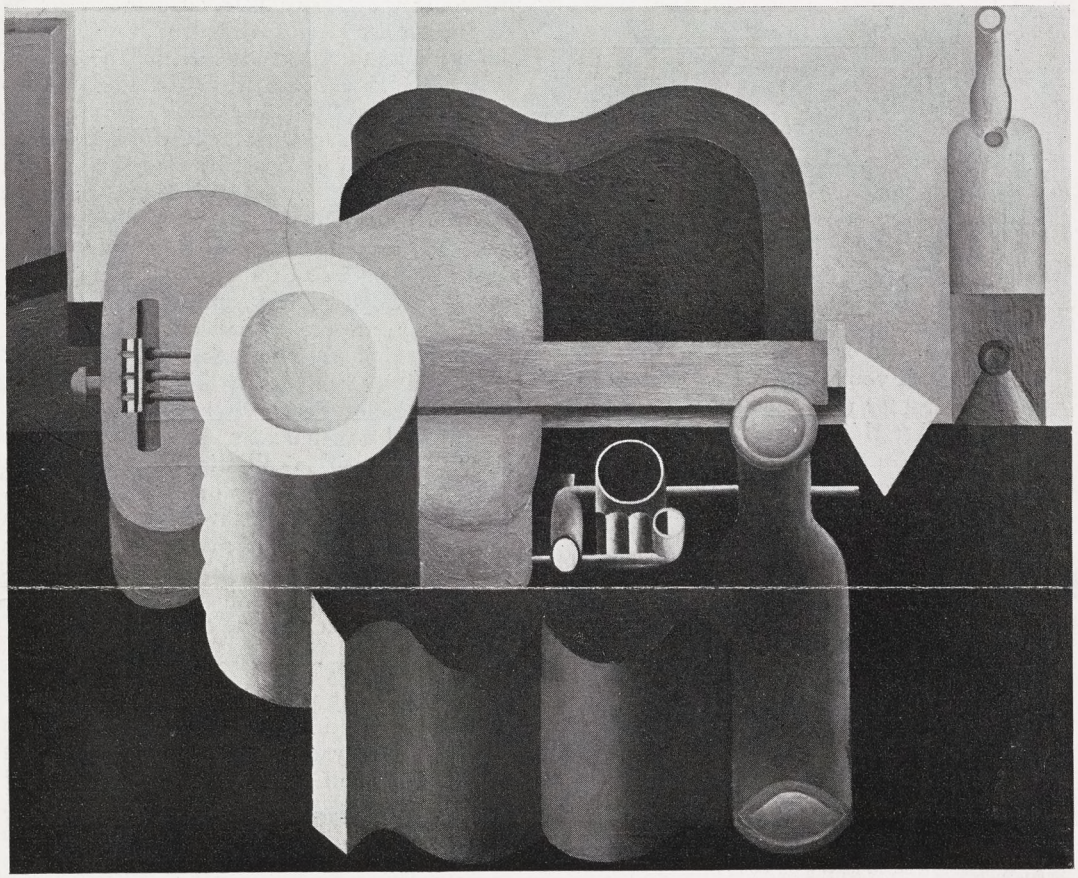
SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION
BULLETIN
VOL. 3 AUGUST, 1936 NO. 3



STILL LIFE, *oil by Le Corbusier (Chas.-Edouard Jeanneret)*. Now showing, San Francisco Museum of Art.

Exhibition of Abstract Art

By CHARLES LINDSTROM

The widespread interest and study that have been occasioned by the Exhibition of Abstract Art now showing at the San Francisco Museum of Art demonstrate the sophistication of the West. There has been almost a complete absence both of indignant remonstrance and hysterical espousal. The exhibition is retrospective and analytic, arranged with an objectivity which permits a keener perception both of its intrinsic worth and of its value in application. The formidable mystery of the many isms is minimized. The analytic approach pursued in the hanging of the canvases is accurately reflected in the sensible, objective attitude of gallery visitors.

Both the names and the work of most of the artists represented are already well known here, but never before has there been so complete a survey of all movements, and never before have there been assembled at once such invariably fine examples. Together these works may be used as diagrammatic analyses of the formal appeals which underlie all art.

To quote from "Cubism and Modern Art" (published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York), "Abstract art today needs no defense. It has become one of the many ways to paint or carve or model. But it is not yet a kind of art which people like without some study and some

sacrifice of prejudice. . . . The painter of abstractions can and often does point to the analogy of music in which the elements of rhythmic repetition, pitch, intensity, harmony, counterpoint, are composed without reference to the natural sounds. . . . He looks upon abstract painting as independent painting, emancipated painting; as an end in itself with its own peculiar value.

"To support their position defenders of abstract art during the past twenty-five years have often quoted a famous passage from the 'Philebus' of Plato, Section 51c:

> 'Socrates: What I am saying is not indeed directly obvious. I must therefore try to make it clear. I will try to speak of the beauty of shapes, and I do not mean, as most people would think, the shapes of living figures, or their imitations in paintings, but I mean straight lines and curves and the shapes made from them, flat or solid, by the lathe, ruler and square, if you see what I mean. These are not beautiful for any particular reason or purpose, as other things are, but are always by their very nature beautiful, and give pleasure of their own quite free from the itch of desire; and the colors of this kind are beautiful, too, and give a similar pleasure.' "

To speak the same language one must read the same literature. The San Francisco Museum of Art has provided this common ground by bringing the finest exhibitions of the East to San Francisco. The schedule of this one is significant. After its first showing at the Museum of Modern Art in New York during the month of April, it was reassembled and improved in many particulars and then sent directly to the San Francisco Museum to inaugurate the circuit which will take it from here to a few of the leading museums of the Middle West and Eastern Seaboard.

' ' '

New Members, San Francisco Art Association

Mrs. Berrien P. Anderson, Mr. B. G. Arendt, Mr. Charles R. Blyth, Judge Charles R. Boden, Miss Dixie Leigh Cavalier, Mrs. William F. Chipman, Mr. William E. Colby, Mrs. Samuel Dinkelspiel, Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker, Jr., Mr. Edward L. Frick, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice E. Harrison, Mrs. Maurice Liebman, Mrs. William H. Lowe, Mrs. Peter McBean, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Meyer, Mrs. Robert Roos, Mrs. Harold Snodgrass.

ASSOCIATE ARTIST MEMBERS

Ida Day Degen, Alex. Haus, Mathilde Drachman Smith.

Gauguin Exhibition

An exhibition of the work of Paul Gauguin is to follow the current exhibition of Abstract Art at the San Francisco Museum of Art. The exhibition has been assembled from all over the country, with the recent New York exhibition as a nucleus. Several important canvases are coming from Europe especially for the exhibition here, including the famous *White Horse,* owned by Baron von der Heydt in Holland. Other splendid examples to be included are the *Three Tahitians,* from the Wildenstein Collection, the superb *Maternity,* from the Adolph Lewisohn Collection, the brilliantly colored *Bathers at Tahiti,* from the collection of the late Joseph Stransky, and the *Portrait of Meyer de Haan,* from the McKean Collection in Boston. In addition to these are several famous self portraits, landscapes painted in Brittany, landscapes painted with Van Gogh in Arles, and most beautiful of all, perhaps, are the exotic landscapes with figures painted in the South Seas toward the end of Gauguin's extraordinary life.

The work of Paul Gauguin has never been shown on the Pacific Coast in a comprehensive exhibition. Two fine collections of wood blocks and color prints have been promised for the exhibition. With several canvases from Western collections added to the material exhibited in New York, Boston and Baltimore, San Franciscans may look forward with keen anticipation to this exhibition.

RARE RUGS AT MUSEUM

Simultaneously with the Gauguin Exhibition a priceless collection of rare Oriental rugs from the Kent-Costikyan Collection in New York will be shown in the Great Court, the Little Court and two galleries. Art Association members from the early days will remember that rugs from this collection formed one of the first exhibitions ever held in San Francisco by the San Francisco Art Association. Many of the fine examples of Persian, Chinese and Indian rugs in California collections were brought to America by Mr. Costikyan, who has been a well-known visitor in San Francisco for many years.

The largest piece in the exhibition is over forty feet long, is finely woven in the silk design, and is valued at half a million dollars. This particular rug was made for the Shah of Persia about 1752 and was exhibited for the first time in America at the opening of Rockefeller Center in 1933. The rug is not for sale, but many of the rare large rugs and all of the smaller ones are on the market. C. D.

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A course of ten lectures on History of Art and Appreciation, by Mrs. Jane Berlandina Howard, will be held on Tuesdays, 4 to 5 o'clock, California School of Fine Arts, beginning August 25th. Course, $10; single lectures, $.75. (Free to students of California School of Fine Arts.)

VERTUMNUS AND POMONA IN A GARDEN. *Flemish Tapestry.*
Shown with the "Survey of Landscape Painting" at the San Francisco Museum of Art.

The Western Artist East of the Rockies

By CLAUDIA DAVIS

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *Miss Davis, assistant curator of the San Francisco Museum of Art, has recently returned from a trip through the Eastern States, where she made a personal survey of art conditions.)*

One of the curious enigmas of the exhibition world is the scarcity of good paintings from the Pacific Coast in Eastern galleries. New York galleries represent almost every section of the country better than the Far West, nor is this fact the fault of Eastern dealers and institutions. Interest in the artists of the West is keen. The few California shows attract crowds by the very name, but most of the exhibitions of Western work seen by the writer on a recent trip were disappointing in the extreme. The work of our best artists is virtually unknown in the East and the material that trickles through is not representative of all the good work being done here by a wide margin.

An example of this was an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of the Post-Surrealists, a small group of serious artists painting in Southern California and distributing their canvases through a central gallery known as the Hollywood Gallery of Modern Art. The San Francisco Museum of Art held the same exhibition in December of 1935. The difference was that the exhibition was scheduled here as one of a series

San Francisco Art Association Bulletin
Published Monthly by The San Francisco Art Association
Bulletin Editor ..... MILDRED ROSENTHAL
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RAY BOYNTON, MARIAN HARTWELL
Business Manager ..... PLATT KENT

Send material for Bulletin to San Francisco Art Association, Chestnut and Jones Streets, by 20th of each month.

Junius Cravens

The Bulletin records with sorrow the death of Junius Cravens, which occurred in July. A man of quiet, unassuming personality, Cravens nevertheless was a powerful writer, ever ready to champion the cause of the artists, who have always regarded him as a staunch friend. As Art Critic of *The News* Cravens played no small part in furthering the development of Art in the West. It will not be easy to fill his place.

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The Western Artist East of the Rockies

(Continued from page 3)

planned to give a cross-section of various tendencies in painting. In New York it was accepted as a typical California show and that one exhibition did more than seems possible to convince New Yorkers that California is unanimously post-surrealist.

A jealousy between the artists of Northern and Southern California is believed to exist and easterners are under the impression that an all-California show is a political, or possibly one should say, a climatic impossibility.

At the June meeting of the Western Association of Art Museum Directors, in Seattle, all delegates agreed that an all-Pacific-Coast Exhibition should be assembled to tour, first the coast, then the middle west, and finally the east. The task of selection and elimination in each museum community is so complicated that the assembling of such an exhibition would result in disaster unless each director personally assumed the responsibility for the selection in his vicinity.

An excellent example of what might be done was demonstrated in the 1936 Cincinnati Annual this spring when Dr. Walter Siple, director of the Cincinnati Museum, invited Dr. Morley to send six canvases from San Francisco to be included in the Cincinnati exhibition. Dr. Morley sent: *Prune Drying* by Jane Berlandina, *Peaches* by Rinaldo Cuneo, *Embarcadero and Clay Street* by John Howard, *Leaves and Apples* by Dorothy Duncan, *Portrait of Mrs. L.* by Eugene Ivanoff, and *African Marigolds* by William Gaw.

These canvases looked splendid in the Cincinnati Museum and Dr. Siple speaks of them as a "distinct contribution" to his exhibition in an article published in the May Art Digest. Many other San Francisco artists produce painting of equal quality and almost any small group that Dr. Morley selected would have been outstanding in the Cincinnati group just as six canvases selected from the Cincinnati Annual or any important annual held in a large American community are certain to exceed the general average of a local showing of one hundred or more canvases.

The quality of contemporary American painting in various sections is on an astonishingly general level. The problem, then, is to select and assemble such material as will contribute to eastern exhibitions so that the Pacific Coast region will be represented adequately in all American Exhibitions.

The necessity for a united Western front was evident in the First National Exhibition of American Art held in Rockefeller Center from May 18th to July 1st of this year.

This admirable project rather painfully executed through the governors of the various states deserves the interest and support of every Art organization in the country.

At the recent meeting of the Western Directors, Dr. Morley proposed that the following resolution be sent to the Municipal Art Committee in New York: "Be it resolved that, In view of the slight association of the chief executives of our western states with the field of art, the Western Association of Art Museum Directors urges the Municipal Art Committee of the City of New York that, in the event of the much hoped for annual repetition of their national exhibition, the direct cooperation of this organization be accepted in selecting the work of artists in the geographic territory which it represents."

The exhibition this year included ten canvases by California artists, due largely to the last-minute activity of Mr. Ray Boynton, who learned of the exhibition plans by accident. The canvases included were: *Night Scene* by Mathew Barnes, *White Cyclamen* by Jane Berlandina, *Miners* by Ray Boynton, *Mining Mountains* by Helen Bruton, *Apples* by Rinaldo Cuneo, *Still Life* by William Gaw, *A. D. 1885* by William Hesthal, *Cod Fishers* by Otis Oldfield, *Summer Sky* by Gottardo Piazzoni, and *San Francisco Bay* by Farwell Taylor.

These canvases were badly hung in a dark back gallery under a general heading *Pacific Coast States* as though the hanging committee ran out of space, energy and light as they approached the last two hundred of the seven hundred and thirteen works. That these last two hundred should have been Western canvases is eloquent of our standing in New York. The Western canvases themselves were definitely not inferior to the general average and our own group was strong. The size of the exhibition, however, and the fearful habit of hanging double and even triple on the walls, subjected all works in the

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more crowded galleries to a devastating competition with the usual disastrous results.

In spite of these shortcomings it is heartily hoped that the First All-American Exhibition will be followed by a second regularly thereafter. Each state should be allowed fewer canvases so that the size of the exhibition may be reduced at least by half with the same amount of space for hanging. If invited by the Municipal Art Committee of New York, it would be a fine exercise in cooperation for the artists of the Pacific Coast to select canvases for the Second National with such judgment and impartiality as to result in an outstanding section, including Washington, Oregon and California.

The First National Exhibition had only fourteen pieces of sculpture, probably because transportation of sculpture is expensive and difficult. The Pacific Coast was not included in the small sculpture showing, which was unfortunate, because of the unusually high quality of the work of Western sculptors.

Doctor Robert Harshe of the Chicago Art Institute invited five watercolors for inclusion in the 15th International Watercolor Exhibition which is now on view in the San Francisco Museum of Art. Doctor Walter Heil and Doctor Morley sent twenty selected works by local artists for final selection in Chicago and the following were included by Dr. Harshe: *Landscape* by Wolfgang Carlberg, *Mexican Street Scene* by Robert B. Howard, *Nell in a Hat* by Adaline Kent, *Port Costa* by Maurice Logan, and *Artist's Studio* by George Post. These were not only included in the original exhibition in Chicago, but are now on tour with the exhibition which is scheduled in several cities.

The results of W. P. A. activity in the West compare very favorably indeed with those of Eastern projects. Proportionately more artists here are familiar with fresco and tempera and reproductions of works completed here have appeared in many Eastern publications.

Many thoughtful critics look hopefully westward for the greatest development within the next few years. The Western artist is credited with a certain freshness that is sturdy without violence and intelligent without cynicism and if our artists measure up to the best expectations of their Eastern friends it will not be long before our canvases hang with the best regularly.

* * *

The Saturday Class in Landscape Painting (California School of Fine Arts), conducted by Mr. Gottardo Piazzoni, will again be formed this fall. This class is open to others besides students of the School and meets at 9 o'clock at interesting points about the Bay region. In case of inclement weather, studios are used and the time devoted to the study of landscape composition.

National Show of Prints Projected

"America—1936" is the title of a national exhibition of prints by American artists to be presented in 30 cities simultaneously by the American Artists' Congress next December. Prints in any medium may be submitted. No restrictions are placed upon subject-matter, but not more than three works may be sent by any one artist, and none may be larger than 10x14 inches. Thirty copies of each work should be available. Entries close November 1, 1936. Further details regarding conditions of the exhibition may be obtained from the American Artists' Congress, 66 Fifth avenue, New York City.

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Summer Session Successful

The enrollment at the Summer Session, California School of Fine Arts, was the largest since 1932. Students registered from all parts of California and the Western States.

In addition to the major classes in drawing and painting for beginning and advanced students, there were courses in design, lithography and commercial art. The faculty included Maurice Sterne, Lee F. Randolph, E. Spencer Macky, Rinaldo Cuneo, Otis Oldfield, Nelson Poole, Marian Hartwell, Kenneth Hook, Ray Bertrand and Alice B. Chittenden.

Of special interest to many of the students was the series of four intimate concerts given under the auspices of the W. P. A. Federal Music Project and directed by the pianist-composer, Tomo Yogodka.

Students from other localities were impressed with ideal climatic conditions for Summer study in San Francisco, coupled with the inspiring atmosphere of the studios in the school.

* * *

Students' Show at Museum

The work of the students of the California School of Fine Arts will be shown in two of the West Galleries at the San Francisco Museum of Art from August 1 to August 29. So much excellent material was included in the exhibition at the School in May that it has been decided to install four separate groups, each to remain on view for one week only. In this way work from various departments may be adequately installed without crowding and the frequent changes throughout August will stimulate interest in the work of the School.

SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

SECTION 562, P. L. & R.
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August Exhibitions in Local Galleries

SPECIAL LECTURES

San Francisco Museum of Art

August 2—Sunday Afternoon—*Cubism and Abstract Art Exhibition,* Lucien Labaudt, 3 p. m.

August 3—Monday Afternoon—*Gallery Tour,* Jack Brookes, 3 p. m.

August 4—Tuesday Afternoon—*The Result of Abstract Art,* Mona Hofmann, 3 p. m.

August 5—Wednesday Evening—*International Watercolor Exhibition,* Kenneth G. Hook, 8 p. m.

August 6—Thursday Evening—*Tour of Abstract Exhibition,* Charles Lindstrom, 8 p. m.

August 9—Sunday Afternoon—*Feininger Exhibition,* John Humphrey, 3 p. m.

August 10—Monday Afternoon—*Renoir and the Impressionists,* Jack Brookes, 3 p. m.

August 12—Wednesday Evening—*Last Lecture on Renoir,* John Humphrey, 8 p. m.

August 13—Thursday Evening—*Tour of the Watercolor Exhibition,* Jack Brookes, 8 p. m.

August 16—Sunday Afternoon—*Constructivism and Suprematism,* Charles Lindstrom, 3 p. m.

August 17—Monday Afternoon—*Feininger Exhibition,* Charles Lindstrom, 3 p. m.

August 19—Wednesday Evening—Special Lecture—*Abstract Painting,* Margaret Peterson, 8 p. m.

August 23—Sunday Afternoon—*Abstract Art in Industrial Design,* Kenneth G. Hook, 3 p. m.

Amberg-Hirth, 165 Post Street: Fine, modern handcrafts by California artists. Announcing the arrival of pottery created by Anderson Brothers of Mississippi, and the opening of the "Rena Room", where the newest individual creations of Rena Rosenthal of New York will be shown exclusively in San Francisco.

Art Center, 730 Montgomery Street: August 10-22, Watercolors and drawings by Eleanor Guttridge.

Courvoisier Galleries, 480 Post Street: Oil paintings by American artists to September 19. September 21-October 3, Watercolors by Millard Sheets.

California Palace of the Legion of Honor, Lincoln Park: Contemporary paintings from the collection of Oscar F. Mayer.

Gump's, 246 Post Street: September 1-19, general exhibition of paintings and prints. September 21-October 10, exhibition of works of Jerome Blum of New York.

M. H. De Young Memorial Museum, Golden Gate Park: Closed during August.

S. F. Museum of Art, Civic Center: An exhibition of the work of Paul Gauguin has been scheduled for the month of September. Groups of ten or more desiring lectures in August in preparation for the Gauguin Exhibition may make arrangements for afternoon or evening hours by telephone (HEmlock 2040) or at the Museum office.

International Watercolor Exhibition to August 23.

Cubism and Abstract Art to August 27.

Paintings by Lyonel Feininger, August 19-September 15.